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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 1913

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN
RESEARCH¹

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MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

THE intellectual activity of the world, scientific, literary or emotional, passes alternately through fertile and through barren periods. Each fertile period has its characteristic peculiarities and though any one generation may not be competent to form a just estimate of its powers and effects, it is able to compare the fruits of its own labors with the harvest of its predecessors. You will probably agree with me that our age is distinguished by having disclosed a vast array of facts which take us nearer to the infinitesimal structure of matter and which reach further into the infinite design of the universe, than the boldest flight of imagination could have foreseen half a century ago. But we do not flatter ourselves that the intellect of our time, judged by the power of individuals, is exceptionally great. No doubt, men of commanding genius are still with us, but they are not more numerous or more original than in former times. What then is the peculiarity that has produced such great results? In my opinion what has been accomplished is due in great part to the spread of higher education, which has evolved an army of competent investigators possessing enthusiasm for research which now, for the first time, is led into useful paths by the few great minds, whose powers thus receive a wider range and become more productive. It is in this that our great strength lies.

¹Address delivered before the National Academy of Sciences on the occasion of the semi-centennial celebration of its foundation.